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IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-70 (Canceled)

71. (Currently Amended) A method of feeding a bovine, comprising feeding the bovine an effective amount to colonize the rumen of the bovine of a microorganism of the genus *Propionibacterium*, the microorganism being *P. acidipropionici* strain P169.

72. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 71, wherein the bovine is fed the microorganism such that the amount of microorganism ~~delivered~~fed to the bovine is about 6×10^9 CFU to about 6×10^{12} CFU/animal/day.

73. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 72, wherein the bovine is fed the microorganism such that the amount of microorganism ~~delivered~~fed to the bovine is about 6×10^{11} CFU/animal/day.

74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the bovine is fed the microorganism from -2 to 12 weeks postpartum.

Claims 75-77 (Canceled)

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78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the bovine is fed the microorganism until populations of 10^5 to 10^8 CFU/ml ruminal fluid are established in the rumen of the bovine.

Claims 79-81 (Canceled)

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